

***Legislation Providing for Government Financing of Federal Elections Estimated to Cost American Taxpayers Over \$700 Million; Unlikely to Achieve Intended Goals***

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**WASHINGTON** - Today, the Committee on House Administration heard from election experts cautioning Congress about the costly, adverse effects the Fair Elections Now Act (H.R. 1826) would have on American taxpayers and the overall electoral process.

"I am concerned by the notion that taxpayers would be compelled to fund political campaigns," the Committee's Ranking Republican Dan Lungren, R-Calif., noted at today's hearing. "The last thing the American people need is for this Body to heap greater debt on the backs of our children for the sake of political campaigns."

Lungren also cited a 2009 study by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) that reported a sharp decline in the percentage of taxpayers who have opted to contribute to the existing federal public financing system over the past three decades. According to the CRS report, 28.7% of taxpayers opted to contribute in 1980, but by 2007 that percentage dropped to a mere 8.3%.

John Samples from CATO's Center for Representative Government also challenged the false assumption that most taxpayers would support financing political campaigns. "Most people

object, I believe, to being forced to pay taxes to support campaigns and candidates they do not support and may actively dislike or oppose," Samples noted in his testimony. "Such taxation also deprives voters of the choice of not contributing to any candidate."

The Chairman of the Center for Competitive Politics, Bradley Smith, noted a [recent analysis](#) conducted by the Center that estimates the Fair Elections Now Act (FENA) would cost American taxpayers - at a minimum - \$700 million annually for a campaign financing system that would have, "little likelihood of success."

According to Smith, state programs similar to that proposed by FENA have not only failed to save taxpayers money, but have also done little to increase public confidence and voter participation. "The Program will quite likely do damage to the citizen trust in government and the fairness of the campaign process," Smith stated in [his testimony](#) .

For more information, please contact the Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.